



***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
November 18-22, 2013***

First Nations youth summit pushes education, empowerment

[The StarPhoenix](#)

November 20, 2013

Betty Ann Adam



SASKATOON, SASK.--NOV. 19, 2013--Assembly of First Nations Youth Leadership participants wait to sign up for various workshops at Teachers Credit Union Place on November 19, 2013 in Saskatoon. {RICHARD MARJAN/STARPHOENIX} Photograph by: Richard Marjan, The StarPhoenix

Shyanne St Denis, an honour roll student throughout high school, still chafes at the memory of teachers who wanted her mother to place her in an alternate program when she was in elementary school.

"She was like, 'Absolutely not because my daughter can learn the same way as everybody else.' "

St Denis considers school officials being too quick to label native kids as slow learners a type of bullying, and she urges her peers to stand up for themselves and for each other.

St Denis will be among delegates to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) national youth summit marching against bullying today in Saskatoon.

Once back at TCU Place, more than 300 youth from across the country will continue talking about wide-ranging issues that affect them and brainstorming solutions to those problems.

The National Youth Council will present its five-year action plan to AFN Chief Shawn Atleo, who was at the conference Tuesday, where he hosted a panel of young leaders sharing ideas for improving their lives and their world.

Savannah Simon, 26, considers herself a front-line warrior for the Earth as she protests fracking (the hydraulic fracturing method of shale-gas exploration) at an encampment at her home community of Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick.

She was appalled by violent clashes between protesters and RCMP officers in October, but she was heartened by an outpouring of support from people who came or sent supplies.

She urged the youth to stay informed about the issues that affect them.

"Ignorance is our common enemy," Simon said.

Another way to make difference every day is by staying free from alcohol and drugs that have caused terrible problems for every person she knows, Simon said.

Sharing in talking circles, listening to the elders and bonding over shared experiences can strengthen a person's resolve, she said.

Loving each other will also improve one's own life and community, said Simon, who likes to hug everybody she encounters.

She remembers the email she received from a boy who got one of those hugs. He said he hadn't been hugged by anyone in a long, long time and that act of affection turned him away from thoughts of taking his own life.

"We're all negatively affected by drugs and alcohol, physical abuse and neglect ... We need to set new standards of healthy relationships and self respect," she said.

Atleo said youth make up more than half of the First Nations populations and recognize they are a force to be reckoned with.

"This (summit) is about youth empowerment ... Really important conversations are already occurring.

"Youth are stepping forward and being empowered to demonstrate leadership, not to wait until they're in elected positions.

The national youth council works closely with the AFN's elders council and the women's council, which refer to themselves collectively as the family council.

Residential schools tore families apart and undermined language and culture, but the family council is one way to pull the generations back together, Atleo said.

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Staff at Saskatchewan university calls for end of First Nations logos, mascots

CTVNews.ca

November 16, 2013 10:17PM EST

A department from the University of Saskatchewan's college of education is calling for the retirement of school mascots and logos that depict First Nations people.

The resolution, which was unanimously passed on Friday, states that the Department of Educational Foundations "does not support the use of Indigenous people depicted as school mascots, in logos, slogans or team names" in primary, secondary and post-secondary schools.

In an email to CTV Saskatoon, department head Diane Miller said the idea that such logos and mascots are positive representations of Indigenous peoples is "false."

Many are calling for the Bedford Road Redmen to change their logo and mascot.

"These images spring from centuries-old racist discourses," she wrote. "The Department of Educational Foundations agrees that it is time to stop pretending that stereotyping is an honour. It is racism."

The resolution was posted to a [Facebook page](#) that's calling on a local high school team to stop using the "Redmen" name and mascot. Bedford Road Collegiate is the city's second oldest high school. Some faculty members from the Department of Educational Foundations say the school's mascot and team name are out of date.

"We won't stand for racism anymore. Especially in a community that has a very large aboriginal population," Alex Wilson, a faculty member from the department, said.

While some faculty members recognize that there is a tradition behind many of these team names, they say there is more at stake than tradition.

"We listen to the aboriginal community and if many of them are saying this is wrong, then we have to respect that," faculty member Paul Orlowski said.

Activist Erica Lee created the Facebook page calling on Bedford Road Collegiate to drop the "Redmen" name. She said her cause is being helped by a similar debate that's taking place in the U.S.

The Washington Redskins football team is facing pressure to change its name. Even U.S. President Barack Obama has weighed in, stating that if he was the team's owner, he'd consider changing it.

"The fact that people are starting to get behind it with the whole Redskins controversy in Washington is really important," Lee said.

And while it is only one department from the university's college of education that voted for the resolution, the faculty members hope other departments will soon follow.

The Saskatoon Public School division was not able to provide a comment on the issue to CTV Saskatoon.

With a report from CTV Saskatoon's John Baglieri

Yum Yum Chips brings back its vintage cartoon aboriginal boy mascot

Canada.com

November 18, 2013



Vintage bags of Yum Yum potato chips featuring their little indian logo are pictured Friday, November 15, 2013 in Montreal. The company is offering them over the holiday season again after changing the packaging during the 1990 Oka native crisis. Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS/Ryan Remiorz

MONTREAL – A Quebec snack-maker won't back down from plans

to re-introduce a popular old logo of a cartoon aboriginal boy in a loincloth and feathered hat.

Krispy Kernels snack foods drew some criticism for a holiday marketing campaign featuring the old logo that hasn't been on the market for more than 20 years.

Its chip-package logo was well known for decades in Quebec, where the company is based.

It first appeared when the company was founded in 1959 and disappeared from the shelves in 1990 during the Oka Crisis, a land dispute that resulted in a standoff and the death of a provincial police officer.

Now, the logo has returned for a short time as part of a marketing campaign that runs until Christmas. Stores have begun stocking the limited edition packaging and as part of the campaign, customers can pose for a photo behind a life-size cardboard store display of the mascot to win prizes.

The campaign comes while debate rages over Native American sports logos and team names in the U.S., as well as the ongoing Idle No More protests in this country.

The company did not wish to be interviewed but did say, in interviews it granted before a media blackout, that it was surprised by some of the negative reaction.

A media spokeswoman also provided a statement. In it, the company, based in Warwick, Que., defended the decision as part of a vintage marketing campaign, with a throwback to the 1960s packaging.

The company said the mascot character was a nod to the original creator of the potato chip, likely an aboriginal person.

Also, it said the character was designed by a young child as part of a contest.

The return to the roots of the family-owned company is also a tribute to Paul Jalbert, the man behind Yum Yum Chips and Krispy Kernels, who passed away in October at age 94.

"Far from being a derogatory caricature, the character represents a homecoming for Yum Yum. It is witness to our roots and our origins. A nostalgic look at our history, but also an opportunity to revive the memory of our customers," the company said.

Some people agree.

The company's Facebook page attracted a flurry of comments about the decision when it was announced earlier this month.

Many applauded the company for bringing back the logo, a piece of nostalgia from their childhood. They said calling it racist was an exaggeration.

"To see this as some form of racism, is pushing the issue a bit too far," one said.

Others call the logo a racist stereotype.

"Indigenous peoples are more than these stereotypes," one person posted. "This kind of image does not belong in the 21st century. I'm sorry if this racist image is part of your childhood."

The grand chief from a Mohawk community near Montreal told a radio station last week the campaign was in bad taste.

And the editor of the local paper in that community, Kahnawake, said some people can't believe the image has resurfaced.

"It's a horrible caricature of what one person thought that all native people should be represented with," said Steve Bonspiel, editor of the Eastern Door.

"What if they'd used any other ethnicity? What kind of outrage would there have been?"

Bonspiel said he remembers Yum Yum Chips growing up but, back then, no one made a fuss about the logo. Bonspiel says perhaps people weren't as politically active or conscious about history and debunking myths.

"Because it's native people, it's accepted and it's been done for so many years, people think (it's) no big deal," Bonspiel said.

"But we see everything wrong with it."

One Mohawk activist, Irkar Beljaars, told The Canadian Press this week that his attempts to call the company have been fruitless.

He called the campaign "retro racism."

"It's a logo that has been around since I was a kid and I've never eaten Yum Yums because of that logo," said Beljaars, 42, who grew up in Quebec.

"I thought they would have learned their lesson during the Oka Crisis but obviously they didn't."

Beljaars called it a cash grab. "It's taking our likeness and selling a product and that's my biggest beef."

Since speaking out about the packaging, he's been called out for being over-sensitive.

But Beljaars said he believes any other community would be up in arms about such a campaign.

"They tend not to care as much about it because it's First Nations and they see us as being over-sensitive," Beljaars said.

A Concordia University professor says the timing of the campaign couldn't be worse, considering the controversy in the U.S. over sports franchise names.

In October, President Barack Obama suggested in an interview that the Washington Redskins should consider changing their name — a suggestion dismissed by the team and its owner.

In early November, many protested in Minneapolis, calling the Redskins name racist and disrespectful.

"Especially in light of what's being talked about in the United States with the Washington Redskins, it's a hot-button issue right now and they're flying right into the face of it," said Harold Simpkins, a marketing professor at Concordia University.

But Simpkins said the campaign might have been planned well before the long-running controversy reached a boiling point in October.

He said it's never easy to nix a product after committing to it.

But Simpkins said he doesn't see a grey area in this issue.

"I think it's an ill-advised decision on their part," said Simpkins.

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School at Saugeen unlikely if act passed

[Owen Sound Sun Times](#)

November 17, 2013 11:39:59 EST AM

Rob Gowan



Saugeen First Nation

Any hope Saugeen First Nation has of constructing and managing its own school would be dashed under proposed new federal legislation.

Gayle Mason Stark, the education director of Saugeen First Nation, said Friday that under a draft First Nation

Education Act released last month, any new schools on First Nations would no longer be permitted.

"Whatever is out there now, that is the end of any new schools and of charter schools," Mason Stark said, adding the legislation would also take control of schools on reserves away from the bands.

"Any First Nations that are already working under a memorandum of understanding . . . what the act says is they will permit those to go through the cycle this year, but then they will be subject to this new act. So all the work these people have done over the years is for naught."

The draft First Nation Education Act was to be discussed at a community meeting at G.C. Huston School in Southampton on Saturday. The proposed act was first released last month and was immediately attacked by First Nations, who expressed disappointment and anger. While the proposed act would allow bands to operate schools, the federal government would set and enforce standards for schools located on reserves.

Saugeen First Nation has been without its own schools since the 1960s when the Department of Indian Affairs closed the schools in the community. The Saugeen First Nation has service agreements with the Bluewater District School Board and Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board for its students. It does provide junior and senior kindergarten on the reserve.

"It has been a wish of the community for many, many years, but the fact is there are only a few schools being built across Canada," said Mason Stark.

Elementary students from Saugeen First Nation attend Bluewater's G.C. Huston in Southampton and the catholic board's St. Joseph's School in Port Elgin. Some students also attend a private school and a christian school.

G. C Huston provides students with about 40 minutes a week in aboriginal language teachings, but Mason Stark said it isn't enough to retain the language.

"There is no specific cultural content in the province and we are hoping they will do that as time moves forward," said Mason Stark. "The majority of G.C. Huston are from Saugeen and they make up a greater proportion of the students going to that school, so in essence it is a First Nations school which is off-reserve and under the responsibility of the Bluewater board."

Mason Stark said it hurts the community because they have no way of engaging the youth.

"The community is built around the school and that loss has been felt for many years that we haven't had that kind of connection," said Mason Stark.

The Chippewas of Nawash opened its own brand new junior kindergarten through Grade 8 school at Cape Croker last year after a decade-long push to replace its aging former school. The new school is administered by its own school board.

"I think the Nawash school will be one of the last schools to have been built," said Mason Stark, who added Aboriginal Affairs Canada appears to be trying to transfer the management of schools over to the province of Ontario.

Close to \$350,000 earmarked for developing mental health program specifically for First Nations men and boys

[Sarnia Observer](#)

November 16, 2013 12:50:37 EST PM

Barbara Simpson



Kettle & Stony Point will soon become a hub for First Nations men's mental health research in the province.

Movember Canada recently awarded \$348,000 to community partners and researchers to establish a program of mental health services in the community northeast of Sarnia.

New mental health research has found Kettle Point First Nations men are more likely than women to feel their mental health needs aren't being met.

Almost 50% of surveyed men also reported they believe people would think less of a person who has been in treatment for mental health problems, according to a comprehensive study recently completed by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

"Generally speaking, the men who participated in our project felt more so than women that their mental health needs were not well understood and because their mental health needs were not well understood, they weren't being addressed in existing mental health services," said Julie George, mental health and addiction coordinator in Kettle & Stony Point Health Centre.

The three-year research project funded by Movember Canada will allow men who participate in the study to help shape their own mental health services.

George said men may ask for the development of resources, including educational videos and books.

"I think it'll result in a really different way of thinking of mental health and a really different way of addressing it from the point of view of the consumer," George said.

In the final year of the project, participants will be hired to act as ambassadors, sharing their new program with other First Nations communities across Ontario.

"It's innovative in a number of ways," George said of the project. "It's innovative in itself that the development of solutions to the issue of mental health is led by consumers."

Results from the comprehensive local Researching Health in Ontario Communities (RHOC) studies are expected to be released at the end of this month.

More than 600 First Nations residents participated in the studies, answering a two-hour online survey and providing genetic samples in an on-site mobile lab that visited both Kettle Point and Aamjiwnaang.

George said the Kettle Point community is excited about becoming a leader on the topic of First Nations men's mental health. She spoke with one RHOC participant who was thrilled to learn about the development of programs specifically geared to First Nations men.

"He said, 'This is about time that we start talking about this openly and start addressing the issue,'" she said. "He was a bit overwhelmed by it because he thought it was such an important thing to be happening right now."

Marilyn Wapass, First Nations protester, guilty of contempt: Member of Thunderchild First Nation refused to leave oil exploration land

[CBC News](#)

Nov 15, 2013 12:38 PM CT



Marilyn Wapass (left) and supporters from the Thunderchild First Nation. (David Shield, CBC)

A woman from the Thunderchild First Nation has been found guilty of contempt of court.

Marilyn Wapass was arrested in August after she refused to leave an on-reserve oil exploration site.

However, Wapass will not be fined and will not have to serve a jail

sentence. She's happy with the decision.

"I think by his decision that he made today, he understood, or at least acknowledged how sacred our sundance grounds are to us as First Nations people," she said.

Protesters occupied a traditional sundance ground for weeks, saying that nearby seismic crews were disturbing the site.

'We both know that if we meet again on this issue, it will end very differently.' -
Justice Shawn Smith

Eventually, protesters were ordered to leave the area. When Wapass refused, she was arrested.

In his decision, Justice Shawn Smith called this a 'family dispute' between the residents of the Thunderchild First Nation.

He said it was frustrating that protesters and band council could not agree on the boundaries of the sundance area, and asked that both sides resolve the issue peacefully.

Justice Smith told Wapass this sentence was a warning.

"We both know that if we meet again on this issue, it will end very differently," he said.

Protesters have filed a countersuit against the First Nation, demanding that any oil exploration or drilling near the grounds cease.

Assembly of First Nations Continues Call to Protect Our Sacred Waters

[Canada NewsWire](#)

Nov. 15, 2013 /CNW

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo today reminds us all the responsibility given by the Creator to protect our water sources and ensure that our water rights are protected, consistent with principles of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples. First Nations have the right to free, prior and informed consent to developments on our lands, waters and coastal seas.

"First Nations access to the water through and beyond First Nation's boundaries is unjustly restricted and controlled due to licenses held by other parties. This is becoming more of a concern as rivers become depleted due to climate change and

increased industrial uses," said National Chief Atleo. "First Nations never relinquished our inherent rights and responsibilities to water and remain united coast to coast to coast in upholding our rights and our duties towards water. First Nations have been calling attention to this matter for years and we need to better protect access to fresh water to ensure the health and safety of our people."

AFN NB/PEI Regional Chief Roger Augustine said: "First Nations are stewards of the land and recognize water as a sacred gift that connects all life. The waters in Canada are increasingly being disrespected, misused and polluted by industrial and resource development, agriculture, urbanization and climate change. All First Nations place a high importance on water, and practice sacred ceremonies to ensure waters are respected and that these water ceremonies are passed on to future generations. First Nations must be adequately and fairly consulted and accommodated prior to any decisions or actions related to our waters in Canada's provinces or territories."

AFN continues to work on the recognition and respect for First Nations rights, jurisdiction, management and access to water. A draft First Nations National Water Declaration was presented at the 2013 AFN Annual General Assembly and will be presented at the 2013 AFN Special Chiefs Assembly in December for full endorsement.

You can view a copy of the draft First Nations National Water Declaration at: <http://64.26.139.40/uploads/files/water/afn-water-declaration.pdf>

SOURCE Assembly of First Nations

Harper Government Announces New Measures to Strengthen Emergency Management on Reserve

[Canada NewsWire](#)

November 19, 2013

The Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, today at the meeting of provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Leaders of the National Aboriginal Organizations, announced that the Government of Canada is taking action to strengthen emergency management support to First Nation communities.

"The health and safety of First Nation communities is a priority for our Government, including timely, effective and efficient support in times of emergency," said Minister Valcourt. "That is why we are taking action to ensure that all residents of First Nation communities receive emergency services comparable to those that protect every other Canadian. We will work with provinces and territories to support stronger and more resilient First Nation communities."

This new approach will allow the Government of Canada to build on successful agreements already in place, such as the formal agreement that the federal government has with the [Alberta Emergency Management Agency](#). This agreement facilitated successful response and quick recovery efforts for the First Nation communities affected by the major flooding event in Alberta earlier this year. The Government intends to work towards similar agreements with all provinces and territories.

"Our Government is ensuring First Nation communities are supported during emergency events," said the Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. "A comprehensive single window will make it easier for provinces and territories and First Nations to access federal funding for on-reserve emergency management costs and is a positive improvement for the Emergency Management Assistance Program."

"The Alberta Government was able to respond quickly to the needs of First Nations when the floods hit due to the relationships we have with the individual communities and the agreement we have in place through the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. I'm encouraged to see the Federal government make changes that will support First Nations in emergency situations and provide a quicker response," said the Honourable Robin Campbell, Alberta Minister of Aboriginal Relations.

"The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to providing the same level of emergency management services to First Nations as we provide to non-First Nation communities. We look forward to working with the federal government and First Nation emergency management partners so we can continue to improve the level of emergency preparedness across Saskatchewan," said the Honourable Jim Reiter, Saskatchewan's Minister Responsible First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs.

The Government of Canada will:

- create a new single-window for First Nations to secure funding for emergency costs, including those previously funded under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, which will eliminate overlap and provide First Nations and provinces and territories improved access to emergency funding when needed;
- provide \$19.1 million from within the Government's resources to facilitate negotiation and implementation of new or renewed agreements with provinces and territories and support emergency preparedness activities including the development of emergency management plans for First Nation communities;
- commit stable funding for response and recovery activities, which in turn would provide greater certainty to First Nations, provinces and territories and confirm our commitment to address their needs; and

- revise the Emergency Management Assistance Program to provide greater clarity about expense eligibility and strengthen program management.

As bilateral agreements for emergency management on-reserve are improved or negotiated with provinces and territories, the federal government will continue to work in partnership with First Nations. This important work will begin with outreach to the provinces and territories today.

The Government of Canada is taking action across all four pillars of emergency management: response, recovery, preparedness and mitigation, to help ensure that First Nation communities have access to robust and effective emergency management regimes.

SOURCE Government of Canada

First Nation on way to self-government: Major milestone for Mi'Kmaq of Conne River

Carbonear Compass
November 19, 2013
Clayton Hunt



© Clayton Hunt photo Chief Misel Joe beams with pride as he signs the Self-Government Agreement-In-Principle with the Federal and Provincial Governments on Friday, November 8.

Down through the years the Mi'Kmaq of the Miawpukek First Nation (Conne River) have completed many long and historic journeys.

One of these significant treks started in 2004 when they began their odyssey toward self-government. This major trek took a giant step toward completion on Friday, November 8 when they signed a Self-Government Agreement-In-Principle (AIP) with representatives from the Provincial and Federal governments.

Chief Misel Joe signed the historic document on behalf of his people along with the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and the Honourable Nick McGrath, the Provincial Minister of Transportation and Works and Minister Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs. The Honourable Tracey Perry, the MHA for Fortune Bay-Cape La Hune also signed the document on behalf of her constituents.

Minister Valcourt said that the AIG is a key to achieving reconciliation and to rebuilding relationships between First Nations and all Canadians while remembering a shared goal, which is to work toward a respectful relationship and a promising future for a better Canada that benefits everyone who lives here.

Minister Valcourt said, "Self-Government is one of the tools that can help First Nations to move away from the Indian Act which is an impediment for progress by aboriginals. Self-Government gives a First Nation greater control over its destiny, and it is this measure and the promises that come with it that will help Conne River grow as a community.

"The Miawpukek First Nation is a leader in this country of strong governance, of rigorous accountability, sound planning and financial management, which is a credit to Chief Joe, his council and the community at large.

"The signing of this AIG, although not a binding document, signals the beginning of the final agreement negotiations as it moves the Miawpukek First Nation one vital step closer to self government and self-sufficiency because good governance gives First Nations communities the tools needed to unlock economic opportunities for the benefit of their communities and their members and all Canadians.

"This AIG will provide the Mi'Kmaq of Conne River with greater flexibility and control in the delivery of their programs and services in a manner best suited to their culture and values."

Chief Misel Joe also talked about how the AIG will help the Miawpukek First Nation moves away from the Indian Act

'This AIG is so important for us," Chief Joe said, "as the Indian Act is so confining and outdated. Although we are the first aboriginal group in Atlantic Canada to sign a document like this, many First Nations across the country are trying to get themselves out from under the Indian Act. Self-government will allow us to do just that as we will no longer depend on the Federal Government, through the Indian Act, to do what we need to do to help this community grow and prosper.

The AIP sets out jurisdictions, rights and limitations for the Miawpukek First Nation in a variety of subject areas. These include culture and language, education, health, child and family services, land management, resource management, licensing, regulation and operation of businesses and administration of justice.

The Miawpukek First Nation's lawmaking powers are tied to reserve lands, with the exception of income support where the First Nation may offer income support to its members whether they live on or off reserve.

Tammy Drew, the General Manager of the Conne River Band Council, said that the AIP is momentous in that it will help the council fill in the details on information related to the school programs, health delivery and many other topics.

Ms. Drew said, "Overall, this AIP will help us find answers to the main question which is simply — what will self government mean on day-to-day basis for me as a

band member living in Conne River? We still have a long way to go in the overall process, but this is certainly an important milestone in this important journey."

Minister McGrath said, "This government believes that the aboriginal society within our province should have self government as it makes them more sustainable from a cultural and historical point of view. I'm very proud to be a part of this historic moment today for the Miawupek First Nation."

Information on the AIG will be made public on the websites of the parties as part of a continuing effort to inform and engage third parties and key stakeholders during negotiations toward an eventual Final Agreement.

First Nations woman told to stop building her own house: Ministry of Natural Resources says Savant Lake area resident does not have a permit to do the work

[CBC News](#)

Nov 20, 2013 12:58 PM ET



The Ministry of Natural Resources has ordered Darlene Necan to stop building a home on her family's traditional trapline, because she doesn't have the proper permits in place. (Two Row Times)

The province has ordered an aboriginal woman from northwestern Ontario to stop building a home on what she considers her family's traditional land.

Darlene Necan is building her own home on her family's traditional trapline, outside the boundaries of Saugeen First Nation, near Pickle Lake.



Darlene Necan gets a hand to construct her one-room cabin near Savant Lake, Ont. (Alex Felipe)

In an [earlier CBC News story](#), she said her needs — and those of many other off-reserve members —

aren't being met by the First Nation leadership.

"Being homeless all the time, that kind of got to me," Necan said. "It seemed like society pushed me back on our land, and that's why I started building on our trapline."

But last month, the Ministry of Natural Resources issued a stop-work order, and told her she could face a \$10,000 fine if she doesn't get a permit.

"I know I could have done all the stuff that they asked me [to do] by paperwork, but then I'm thinking, 'I come from here,'" Necan said. "Why would I start paying a permit to build on my own land?"

'I gotta help myself'

Necan said she still plans to finish the house and move in, despite the order from the MNR.

A ministry spokesperson confirmed the order has been issued but declined to comment further, saying the issue is in the hands of the MNR enforcement branch.

This is not the first time Necan has undertaken building a home. She led an initiative [to build a log house two years ago](#) for an elder who was living in what Necan called a small "chicken shack."

Necan herself is currently homeless and living in a shack.

"[I'm] trying to stand on my own two feet, to build my own house, a place to call home," she said. "So I gotta do something and I gotta help myself and ... build my own home in my own traditional land."

Necan said she is building the house with the support of the Indigenous Commission of the International League of People's Struggles, many grassroots activists and several union locals.



Lack of Gladue report writers in northwest a 'crisis': Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services asking Legal Aid Ontario to fund three Gladue workers

[CBC News](#)

Nov 20, 2013 11:01 AM ET

Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services is calling for more justice workers in the northwest.

The law requires courts to consider special circumstances when sentencing Aboriginal offenders, but there are no workers to do the research on what are called Gladue reports.

The head of Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services said she considers the situation a crisis.

Celina Reitberger said Gladue workers document the factors in an Aboriginal person's life that may have contributed to their committing a crime.



Celina Reitberger, head of Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services says she considers the lack of Gladue writers across the north to be a crisis. (Nicole Ireland/CBC)

There are seven dedicated Gladue courts in southern Ontario, but there's only a single Gladue worker in Thunder Bay, who works out of the Indian Friendship Centre. That person is currently on leave, and the centre is scrambling to find a temporary replacement.

No other Gladue workers exist in the rest of northwestern Ontario.

"The bulk of the Aboriginal people who are being jailed are in this area and this is an area the size of France and we need help," Reitberger said.

Earlier this year, retired Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci said the province's justice system has failed First Nations people.

He said it's disappointing to hear there aren't adequate resources for producing Gladue reports.

"These are all ... important parts of making sure we are doing the right thing in our justice system," he said.

Can lawyers, probation officers fill in the gap?



Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services is asking Legal Aid Ontario to fund three Gladue workers to cover Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory.

Bernice Dubec, executive director of the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, said her organization has repeatedly told the Ministry of the Attorney General that more Gladue workers are needed, but the response has always been that there is no money available.

In a statement to CBC News, the Ministry of the Attorney General said other professionals can also present Gladue information to the courts.

Probation officers include Gladue factors in their pre-sentence reports, and defence lawyers include them in their submissions to the court.

However, Reitberger said that reporting Gladue factors properly requires someone to build trust with the offender, and go into detail about their background and difficult circumstances in their life.

Defence lawyers don't have the time to accomplish that, she said.

Reitberger added it is "naive" to think the offender will "open up about the darkest corners of their lives" with a probation officer, both because most probation officers are not Aboriginal and because they have the authority to submit information that could send the offender to jail.

First Nations chiefs divided in approach to shale gas: Elsipogtog withdrew from Assembly of First Nation Chiefs of New Brunswick to fight for injunction

[CBC News](#)

Nov 20, 2013 8:21 AM

A split in the aboriginal strategy on shale gas has emerged through the legal battle between Elsipogtog First Nation and the province.

Elsipogtog pulled out of the Assembly of First Nation Chiefs of New Brunswick and challenged the province and SWN Resources Canada in court this week in an attempt to have shale gas exploration suspended in its historic territory.

The federal and provincial governments recognize the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs of New Brunswick as their official negotiating partner on various aboriginal rights issues in New Brunswick. Despite the similarity in name, the New Brunswick group of chiefs has no formal affiliation with the Assembly of First Nations, which is a body of First Nations chiefs in Canada.



Elsipogtog Chief Aaron Sock, right, with lawyer T.J. Burke outside the Justice Building in Fredericton on Monday (CBC)

But Elsipogtog's injunction application alleged the New Brunswick assembly didn't do a good enough job in handling the issue, so it pulled out of the group to seek the injunction on its own.

Elsipogtog Chief Aaron Sock is not sure if his First Nation will rejoin the group.

"That is still something that we wish to discuss as chief and council," said Sock.

The assembly's lawyer, Kelly Lamrock, says Elsipogtog rushed into its court action and suggests it was because Sock and his council are up for re-election in February.

"I think there was a need in Elsipogtog, given the political calendar there, to move a little more quickly," said Lamrock.

Energy Minister Craig Leonard says the division won't affect the province's promise to continue consulting aboriginal people on shale gas development.

"Whether it's the individual First Nations or a group, it'll be up to the First Nations themselves to make that determination themselves," said Leonard.

"It would be ideal if we could speak with one voice representing all fifteen First Nations, but at the same time if that doesn't take place, so be it," said Leonard. "We have to deal with individual First Nations that don't fall under that Assembly umbrella. Either way we know what our responsibility is."

Elsipogtog's bid for the injunction was dismissed by Court of Queen's Bench Justice Judy Clendening.

NAN declares inherent and treaty rights to education

[Wawatay News](#)

November 21, 2013

Rick Garrick

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is standing up for First Nations' inherent and treaty rights to control education in the wake of the federal government's Proposal for a Bill on First Nations Education.

"Today we stand in unity to declare that the future of education in NAN will not be based on federal legislation but on our inherent right to self-government, including education jurisdiction," said Grand Chief Harvey Yesno. "The government of Canada has failed to meet its obligation to deliver education to First Nation students on par with the rest of Canada.

No longer will we allow our children to be denied their inherent right to education."

Yesno, Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic and a group of chiefs, councillors, First Nation educators, Elders and youth announced the NAN Declaration on Our Inherent and Treaty Right to Education on the final day of the Nov. 5-7 Chiefs Summit on Education. More than 200 delegates attended the summit at the Prince Arthur Hotel in Thunder Bay.

"We have a plan, we have a vision to go for our (education) jurisdiction," Kakegamic said.

"We have been in the table for over 10 years in good faith as government to government (over framework agreements for governance and education jurisdiction with the government of Canada and) we want to finish it."

NAN signed framework agreements for governance and education jurisdiction with the government of Canada in October 1999; draft agreements-in-principle for governance and education jurisdiction were tabled in June 2007 and final agreements-in-principle for the governance sector and the education jurisdiction were initialled in July 2009.

The NAN Declaration on Our Inherent and Treaty Right to Education calls for the federal government to acknowledge and respect NAN's inherent right to education; respect the educational obligations made by the Crown to the people of NAN through Treaty No. 9 and Treaty No. 5; recognize NAN's rejection of the imposition of the First Nations Education Act and support NAN First Nations by recognizing their right to self-govern their education systems.

"This is a historic day as NAN leadership stands together to assert our inherent right to lay the path forward for education for the sake of our children and our children's children," Kakegamic said. "We have a sacred trust to our children and future generations to provide a quality education that respects our culture, values, and traditions while enabling them to live safe, healthy and productive lives, and today we are taking action to make that a reality."

Kakegamic said the "jurisdiction route" is key in providing a successful education for community members.

"The reality that we have lived for the past hundred years-plus makes it clear that no one else can or should take responsibility for our future in education," Kakegamic said. "It is up to us and it is our hope, our dreams, our reality and for that we will have to accept that it is also our responsibility."

Recent high school data, from 2004-2009, indicates First Nation students have a graduation rate of about 36 per cent compared to the Canadian graduation rate of 72 per cent, according to an Assembly of First Nations document from the October 2012 Chiefs Assembly on Education.

Kakegamic said many municipal leaders from across northern Ontario support NAN's objectives in education jurisdiction.

"That was a big start yesterday when two municipality organizations stood with us stating publicly their support that both governance and education jurisdiction should go through (to) the final agreement," Kakegamic said. "We're so close — give us the opportunity to finish this (education) jurisdiction."

Chapleau Cree Chief Keith Corston said the Proposal for a Bill on First Nations Education would have major impacts on First Nation communities.

"It's going to impact every community; it's going to impact the seven generations," Corston said. "It's a direct attack against the children, it's a form of assimilation and we have to fight this new legislation."

Corston said there was not any "real consultation" with First Nations about the Proposal for a Bill on First Nations Education.

"We haven't been duly consulted for our consent to have this done," Corston said. "They're taking a word-of-the-street approach to this and we are fed up with this approach and we will be attacking this with vigor."

The federal government announced the Proposal for a Bill on First Nations Education on Oct. 22.

"Our government firmly believes that all First Nation students across Canada deserve access to a school system that meets provincial and territorial standards, while respecting First Nation culture, language, rights and treaties," said Bernard Valcourt, minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. "The draft legislative proposal for First Nation education would put in place a system that is accountable to students, and ensures that First Nation students have access, like all Canadians, to a good education."

The Working Together for First Nation Students: A Proposal for a Bill on First Nations Education includes a number of options, such as First Nations working together to form First Nations education authorities to provide a broader range of services to students and schools.

The proposal also indicates First Nations would be able to enter into agreements with provincial school boards to have First Nation students attend school off-reserve or to manage an on-reserve school and to negotiate self-government arrangements over education, at which point the proposed act would no longer apply to them.

The federal government said it consulted the 600-plus First Nations across the country and other stakeholders through eight face-to-face regional consultation sessions, more than 54 technical briefings and information sessions via video or teleconference sessions and an online survey that received 631 responses.

MP Carolyn Bennett, the Liberal Party of Canada critic for Aboriginal Affairs, said the proposed bill has received a failing grade from coast-to-coast during an Oct. 24 House of Commons session.

"First Nations are rightfully frustrated," Bennet said during the session. "The proposal ignores the fundamental problem of equitable funding. Instead, it imposes new requirements on them with no new resources. Why does the minister still

refuse to deal with the outright discrimination that exists when funding First Nations students?"

Bennett said that more bureaucracy, more paperwork and more power to the minister is not the answer for the two-thirds of First Nation students not completing high school.

"The Conservatives should push pause on this flawed, top-down strategy, sit down with First Nations communities and build a workable, fully funded plan that respects, supports and empowers First Nations to control their own education systems."

Cancer survivor's film makes Aboriginal Film Fest debut: Sarah Simpson-Yellowquill's short film chronicles her efforts to walk again

[CBC News](#)

Nov 20, 2013 5:29 PM CT



Teen cancer survivor's film makes Aboriginal Film Festival

A young Winnipeg woman is making her filmmaking debut at the Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival with a story about her battle with cancer and her efforts to walk again.

Sarah Simpson-Yellowquill's short film, *Yes I Can*, will be screened on Thursday evening at the Globe Cinema as part of the festival's Manitoba Filmmakers Night.

The film, which she wrote and directed, started out as a play she began working on while undergoing treatment for leukemia.

"To cope with cancer, writing was something that helped get me through the day," she told CBC News on Wednesday.



"It was very inspirational to me and others as well."

Sarah Simpson-Yellowquill's short film, Yes I Can, debuts on Thursday evening at the Globe Cinema as part of the Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival's Manitoba Filmmakers Night. (Jillian Taylor/CBC)

When Simpson-Yellowquill was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of 14, doctors told her she would never be able to walk again.

"The doctor said I had neuropathy, which is a dysfunction of one or more peripheral nerves. The nerves in my feet, they were basically gone," she explained in the film.

The teen was confined to a wheelchair for nine months and she couldn't attend school while going through chemotherapy.

Simpson-Yellowquill started writing the play to earn her drama credit, and she later turned it into a screenplay.

In *Yes I Can*, Simpson-Yellowquill's character overcomes her cancer and works on regaining her ability to stand and walk. It ends with her running down a street.

"I keep working every day on it because I'm not going to let the doctors tell me something. I wanted to prove them wrong, and that's why I wrote this screenplay," said Simpson-Yellowquill, who has been cancer-free for almost two years.

"After going through something so terrible, like everything good is going now and it goes so well for me," she added.

"It was worth going through the three years of cancer and all that stuff because, like, it showed me a new side to myself."

Finalists of Aboriginal Filmmaker Fellowship named: Four B.C. writers and directors learn about the business at Whistler Film Festival



Mentor Actor and director Lorne Cardinal will be at the Whistler Film Festival this year to guide four Indigenous filmmakers selected for the Aboriginal Filmmaker Fellowship.

Four Indigenous filmmakers from British Columbia have been chosen as finalists in the first Aboriginal Filmmaker Fellowship at the Whistler Film Festival (WFF).

The fellowship is a two-day creative and business intensive program that is designed to support emerging First Nations writers and directors from B.C. and will take place on Dec. 6 and 7.

The four finalists are Elle-Maijia Tailfeather, with a short documentary called *Dad*, Jay Cardinal Villeneuve with a short drama called *Mikiwam*, Roseanne Supernault, with a short drama called *Hope*, and Sarah Hagar, with a short sci-fi film called *Disorder*.

Their mentors include actor and director Lorne Cardinal, known for his work on *Corner Gas*, producer Cynde Harmon, actor and singer Andrea Menard, and director and actor Marie Clements.

The program's facilitators are Canadian producer Elizabeth Yake and the Sundance Institute's director of Native American and Indigenous program, N. Bird Runningwater.

"We are excited to have First Nations storytelling at the heart of this year's festival. The Aboriginal Filmmaker Fellowship is particularly apropos in a year that we will be screening a strong number of First Nations-themed feature films," says WFF's director of programming, Paul Gratton.

Other input in the sessions will come from the president and CEO of the Canadian Media Fund, Valerie Creighton, and the chair of the imagiNATIVE Film & Media Arts Festival, Marcia Nickerson.

The first day of the program focuses on short film script development with mentors offering constructive feedback and professional advice to help the finalists take their projects to the next level.

The second day allows finalists the chance to work in the WFF's industry Summit ShortWork Lab, where they will get insight in narrative short-form storytelling with a day of panel discussions, pitches, networking and screenings.

Lorne Cardinal said in a release:

"I applaud the Whistler Film Festival for providing an exciting opportunity for Aboriginal filmmakers to enhance their skill set. Not only does it make for a welcoming and inclusive environment for filmmakers to learn and succeed with their projects but their stories can bolster Canadian identity, which in turn strengthens the fabric of our beautiful country."

Aboriginal high school completion rate higher than ever

[Prince George Local News](#)

November 20, 2013

Jonothon Brown



More Aboriginal students are completing high school than ever before in BC.

According to a new study from the Ministry of Education, the six-year completion rate climbed to just over 59%, last school year. It has been on the rise since 2002, and is comparable to the rate all students graduate, at 83%.

In Prince George, the Ministry says 56% of Aboriginal students completed high school.

The six-year rate refers to students who graduate with a Dogwood diploma within six years of starting Grade 8.

Tribal Chief Terry Teegee of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council calls this good news, though he says there is work that still needs to be done to increase Aboriginal graduation numbers.

He says there needs to be an increase in funding for education.

"Under threat, right now is a proposal from the federal government to look at a different funding formula with the First Nations Education Steering Committee," Teegee says. "Which is a provincially-run organization that does great work and there's legislative changes federally that would threaten a lot of the good work that they do."

There were 3,319 Aboriginal students who graduated with a Dogwood last year, a 72% increase from a decade ago.